D. M. Pritchard 2016 (in press), *Ancient History* 46.

PUBLIC SPENDING IN DEMOCRATIC ATHENS*

David M. Pritchard

1. Introduction

This article calculates the public spending of classical Athens. The major public activities of this ancient democracy were festivals, politics and wars. There is hot debate about what was spent on these three activities. Ancient historians cannot agree whether the Athenian *dēmos* ('people') spent more on festivals or wars. This debate goes back to the first book on Athenian public finance. In 1817 August Böckh famously criticised the Athenians for wasting money on their festivals instead of building up their armed forces. Calculating their public spending would settle this debate. Böckh lacked the evidence to do such. Two centuries after him this is no longer the case. But this articles calculations do more than settle a longstanding debate. In classical Athens the *dēmos* had full control over public spending. In the assembly they authorised all the public activities of their state. Assemblygoers understood the financial consequences of their decisions. They knew how much a proposal that was put before them would cost. They had a good general knowledge of what the state spent on its major activities. Consequently they could judge whether a proposal cost the same as what was normally spent on such things. This made it possible for the Athenians to change their pattern of spending and so what they spent on one class of activities relative to other classes. Such votes allowed the *dēmos* to spend more on what they saw as a priority. Over time the sums that they spent on different public activities reflected the order of the priorities that they had set for their state. By calculating these sums this article demonstrates that it was not religion or politics but war that was the overriding priority of the Athenian people.

* This article was finalised for publication at L'Institut d'études avancées de l'Université de Strasbourg. I sincerely thank this institute for awarding me a 1-year fellowship in 2015 and 2016. The article was first delivered as the 2014 Gale Lecture in Ancient Numismatics. I am most grateful to Macquarie University's Centre for the Study of Ancient Numismatics for the invitation to deliver it. In 2014 the article was read as paper at Brown University and Yale University. In 2015 it was read at Cambridge University, Durham University, L'École pratique des hautes études (Paris), die Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Stanford University and the University of Melbourne. In 2016 I read it at die Universität des Saarlandes. I thank all who heard it and *Ancient History*'s anonymous referee for their helpful suggestions. The article draws heavily on D. M. Pritchard, *Public Spending and Democracy* (Austin 2015). It does so courtesy of the University of Texas Press. Unless it is indicated otherwise all the Greek-translations are my own.

2. The Public-Spending Debate

In his *Die Staatshaushaltung der Athener* of 1817 August Böckh criticised the classical Athenian *dēmos* ('people') for spending more on festivals than on wars. By 'squandering away the public revenue in shows and banquets at home' they caused their armed forces to be 'in a continually declining state'.[1] For Böckh this policy was 'unjust and inexpedient, inasmuch as the continuance of it without oppressing the allies was impossible, and the State, being deprived of the means of self-defence in a most frivolous and unpardonable manner, was led on to certain destruction'.[2] In support of his criticism Böckh cited an assembly-speech of 352 BC in which Demosthenes unfavourably compared Athens's waging of war to its staging of festivals: 'In matters pertaining to war and its preparations everything is disordered, uncorrected and indeterminate.'[3] Consequently all naval expeditions are sent out too late to prevent Philip II of Macedonia taking city after city.[4] By contrast, the preparations for the City Dionysia and the Great Panathenaea are ordered by law, guaranteeing that the sponsors of the choruses and of the tribal teams know exactly what to do and 'nothing remains unexamined and indeterminate'. For Demosthenes the result was that the two festivals took place on time, had greater crowds and preparations than any other and used up more money than was spent on even a single naval expedition.[5] Böckh suggested that 'this weak point' was also recognised by Plutarch, who proposed in his *On the Glory of Athens*: 'If the cost of the production of each drama were reckoned, the Athenian people would appear to have spent more on the production of *Bacchaes* and *Phoenician Women* and *Oedipuses* and the misfortunes of Medeas and Electras than they did on maintaining their empire and fighting for their liberty against the Persians.'[6]

In his book's two volumes Böckh exhaustively discussed the evidence that was then available on the scale and the expenses of the festivals of classical Athens and its armed forces. The citizens of this *polis* ('city-state') inscribed many of their assembly-decrees on stone and insisted that their magistrates do the same with financial accounts.[7] Böckh

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[1] A. Böckh, *The Public Economy of Athens*, translated by G. C. Lewis, first English edition (London 1828) i.360-1.

[2] Böckh (n. 1) i.280.

[3] Dem. 4.35-7.

[4] Dem. 4.35, 37.

[5] Dem. 4.36.

[6] Plut. *De glor. Ath.* 349a. Translation by E. Csapo and W. J. Slater, *The Context of Ancient Drama* (Ann Arbor 1994) 149.

[7] P. J. Rhodes, *Ancient Democracy and Modern Ideology* (London 2003) 25-6.

was the first to realise fully the importance of such epigraphical evidence for Ancient History.[8] Consequently more than a quarter of *The Public Economy of Athens* is taken up by his discussion of various inscriptions. This realisation prompted Böckh as he was writing his book to begin the first collection of Greek inscriptions. His corpus proved to be a much larger task than he anticipated and so was only completed by others fifty years later. Since its completion several hundreds of new stelae from classical Attica have been discovered.[9] In spite of his exhaustiveness Böckh thus saw only a fraction of the inscriptions that we have today.

Böckh had no access either to the *Constitution of the Athenians* that ancient writers attributed to Aristotle.[10] In 1891 the British Museum caused a worldwide sensation when it announced its discovery of this lost treatise on 4 rolls of papyrus from Egypt. Today's majority view is that its author was not Aristotle but one of his students in his school in Athens.[11] This treatise expanded enormously our knowledge of this state's institutions. When he wrote *The Public Economy of Athens* Böckh simply lacked the evidence to calculate how much the classical Athenians spent on their two major public activities. Two centuries after his book this is no longer the case. Consequently my recent book is able to estimate the costs of Athenian festivals and wars. Doing so lets us test Böckh's harsh criticism of Athenian spending priorities and the literary evidence that he cited in its support.

The task of estimating total spending on Athenian festivals is made easier by recent studies of the cost of the City Dionysia. The City Dionysia and the Great Panathenaea were by far the largest festivals of the Athenian *polis*.[12] Costing either festival thus sheds light on a significant proportion of the full cost of its festival program. The first to do so carefully for the City Dionysia were Eric Csapo and William Slater. In *The Context of Ancient Drama* they concluded that Athens of the later fifth century contributed 6 talents talents to the City Dionysia, while its chorus sponsors spent 18 talents 5800 drachmas of their own money.[13] The talent (t.) was the largest weight of the silver currency of classical Athens. It was the equivalent of about 26 kilograms. The smallest weight was the obol (ob.), while the most commonly used intermediate weight was the drachma (dr.). There

[8] D. M. Lewis, *Selected Papers in Greek and Near Eastern History*, edited by P. J. Rhodes (Cambridge 1997) 4-5.

[9] C. W. Hedrick, 'Democracy and the Athenian Epigraphic Habit', *Hesperia* 68 (1999) 387-439.

[10] For this attribution see e.g. Diog. Laert. 5.27.

[11] E.g. P. J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia* (Oxford 1981) 51-7.

[12] E.g. Ar. *Pax* 416-20; R. Parker, *Athenian Religion: A History* (Oxford 1996) 5-7, 92.

[13] Csapo and Slater (n. 6) 119-21.

were 6 ob. in 1 dr. and 6000 dr. in 1 t. Csapo and Slater's figures were initially supported by Peter Wilson, whose independent calculations, in *The Athenian Institution of the Khoregia*, resulted in a figure just short of 18 t. for 5 days of choral competitions.[14] Subsequently Wilson completed a new study of this question as part of the project that he and Csapo co-directed on the social and the economic history of Greek drama.[15] His new study draws on a vast array of often overlooked evidence from classical Attica and comparative material from elsewhere to estimate how much this festival cost. His final figure for public spending on the pay of the poets and musicians, the equipment, and the beasts for sacrifice is 13 t. 1300 dr., while the private outlay of the chorus-sponsors and the supervisors of the procession adds up to 15 t. 3900 dr.[16] Of these costings this second study by Wilson is by far the most reliable. Therefore his total cost of 28 t. 5200 dr., that is, some 754 kilograms of silver, for the City Dionysia will be incorporated into my own calculations.

These costings have renewed the early confidence in Böckh's view of what classical Athens spent on its festivals and his literary evidence for it.[17] For example, Csapo and Slater believe that the comment of Plutarch 'though exaggerated, is not wildly so'.[18] Citing their figures, Lisa Kallet suggests that the two passages 'reflect a popular perception of heavy expenditure on festivals', which, she believes, is factually correct, while Wilson concludes: 'ancient claims about Athenian expenditure on their theatre are fully justified'.[19] Such conclusions bolster the long-held view that religion was the topmost priority of the Greek *polis* in classical times.[20] Some who hold this view even argue that the appeasing of the gods was the highest priority of the Athenian *dēmos*; for example, Hugh Bowden concludes: 'Athenian democracy was above all a system for establishing

[14] P. Wilson, *The Athenian Institution of the Khoregia: The Chorus, the City and the Stage* (Cambridge 2000) 95.

[15] P. Wilson, 'Costing the Dionysia', in M. Revermann and P. Wilson (eds.), *Performance, Reception, Iconography: Studies in Honour of Oliver Taplin* (Oxford 2008) 88.

[16] Wilson (n. 15) 119.

[17] E.g. J. E. Sandys, *The First Philippic and the Olynthiacs of Demosthenes with Introduction and Critical and Explanatory Notes* (London and New York 1897) 109-10.

[18] Csapo and Slater (n. 6) 141.

[19] L. Kallet, 'Accounting for Culture in Fifth-Century Athens', in D. Boedeker and K. A. Raaflaub (eds.), *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens* (Cambridge, MA and London 1998) 47; Wilson (n. 15) 119.

[20] E.g. C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'What is Polis Religion?', in O. Murray and S. Price (eds.), *The Greek City: From Homer to Alexander* (Oxford 1990) 322.

and reinforcing the will of the gods'.[21] For Bowden the enormous sums that it spent on festivals bear this out.[22]

These ancient historians question the consensus of those working on Athenian wars. Military historians hold the view that the military spending of classical Athens far exceeded what it spent on all its other public activities combined.[23] With only a handful of exceptions, however, they have shied away from estimating war's full financial cost, because of its great variability between the centuries and from year to year.[24] Instead they only aim for a general sense of the scale of military spending by detailing the known costs of sieges, the known recurring spending on particular armed corps or their own calculations of the cost of an 'average' fleet.[25] As it currently stands it is simply not possible to settle this public-spending debate. Those renewing Böckh's hostile view have only costed a part of the state's festival program, while the opposing view of military historians is only based on some of war's costs. In the hope of settling this two-centuries-old debate, my *Public Spending and Democracy in Classical Athens* estimates the full cost of these two major public activities.

Nevertheless it is only possible to do this from 430 to 350.[26] For these 80 years spending on state-sponsored festivals was remarkably stable.[27] This means that we can make cost-estimates of Athenian festivals on the basis of the surviving evidence from across this period. This is not the case with military spending. The loss of more than one half of the population of adult Athenians during the Peloponnesian War and the collapse of the tribute-bearing empire at its close massively reduced the scale of war that Athens

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[21] H. Bowden, *Classical Athens and the Delphic Oracle: Divination and Democ*racy (Cambridge 2005) 159.

[22] Bowden (n. 21) 10, 156.

[23] E.g. M. L. Cook, 'Timokrates' 50 Talents and the Cost of Ancient Warfare', *Eranos* 88 (1990) 95; V. Gabrielsen, 'Finance and Taxes', in H. Beck (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Greek Government* (Chichester 2013) 333-5; D. M. Pritchard, 'The Symbiosis between Democracy and War: The Case of Ancient Athens', in D. M. Pritchard (ed.), *War, Democracy and Culture in Classical Athens*, (Cambridge 2010) 6; H. van Wees, 'The City at War', in R. Osborne (ed.), *Classical Greece 500-323 BC* (Oxford 2000) 81.

[24] The exceptions are P. Brun, *Eisphora – Syntaxis – Stratiotika: Recherches sur les finances militaires d'Athènes au IVe siècle av. J.-C.* (Besançon and Paris 1983) 144-61; Cook (n. 23); F. E. Robbins, 'The Cost to Athens of Her Second Empire', *CPh* 13 (1918) 361-88.

[25] E.g. van Wees (n. 23) 107-8.

[26] D. M. Pritchard, *Public Spending and Democracy in Classical Athens* (Austin 2015) 11-16.

[27] R. G. Osborne, 'Tracing Cultural Revolution in Classical Athens', in R. G. Osborne, *Debating the Athenian Cultural Revolution: Art, Literature, Philosophy, and Politics 430-380 BC* (Cambridge 2007) 14-15.

could wage in the fourth century.[28] Consequently my recent book costs the armed forces in the 420s and the 370s. The significant changes that Athens made to the financing of festivals and wars after 350 entirely rule out estimates of their costs after this date.

3. The Democratic Control of Public Spending

In classical Athens the *dēmos* had full control over public spending.[29] Consequently a festival could only be expanded or a new one added to the state's program by an assembly-decree.[30] By the 430s the Athenians had long appointed magistrates to manage their festivals alongside the cult personnel that had traditionally done so.[31] The *dēmos* supervised closely how much was spent on each *heortē* or festival. They regularly set a festival's budget in whole or part.[32] The earliest surviving example of such budgeting is a decree of the 460s concerning the Mysteries at Eleusis.[33] In it the *dēmos* set the fees that this cult's priests and priestesses could charge initiates.[34] They set too how much of its sacred funds could be spent on the Mysteries.[35] When the *dēmos* judged that a deity did not have enough money for his or her worship, they often introduced a new tax on those who apparently benefitted the most from the deity's *kharis* ('divine favour').[36]

The *dēmos* had no less control over the funding of the armed forces. Whether, for example, warships would be built and, if so, how many came down to their vote.[37]

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[28] Pritchard (n. 23) 6, 51-5. M. H. Hansen has produced by far the most detailed population-estimates for classical Greek city-states; see e.g. *Demography and Democracy: The Number of Athenian Citizens in the Fourth Century BC* (Herning 1986). He estimates that there were 60,000 adult male Athenians living in Attica in 432/1 (*The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes: Structure, Principles and Ideology*, translated by J. A. Crook [Cambridge, MA and Oxford 1991] 55). P. J. Rhodes independently corroborates this figure (*Thucydides History II Edited with Commentary and Translation* [Warminster 1988] 271-7). At the end of the Peloponnesian War M. H. Hansen calculates that only 25,000 remained (*Three Studies in Athenian Demography* [Copenhagen 1988] 26-8).

[29] L. Migeotte, *Les finances des cités grecques aux périodes classique et hellénistique* (Paris 2014) 40-2, 424-5; Pritchard (n. 26) 16-24.

[30] E.g. *IG* i^3 82.25-30; ii^2 1672.261; P. J. Rhodes, 'State and Religion in Athenian Inscriptions', *G&R* 56 (2009) 8-9.

[31] E.g. *IG* i^3 82.19-25; S. B. Aleshire, 'Towards a Definition of 'State Cult' for Ancient Athens', in R. Hägg (ed.), *Ancient Greek Cult Practice from the Epigraphic Evidence* (Stockholm 1994) 14-15.

[32] E.g. RO 81.B10-25, 27-31; Parker (n. 12) 125.

[33] K. Clinton, *Eleusis: The Inscriptions on Stone: Documents of the Sanctuary of the Two Goddess and Public Documents of the Deme: Volume 2: Commentary* (Athens 2008) 41-2; Rhodes (n. 30) 2.

[34] *IG* i^3 6.C5-31.

[35] *IG* i^3 6.C14-20.

[36] E.g. *IG* i^3 8.15-25; 138.1-8.

[37] E.g. [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 46.1; Thuc. 8.1.3; Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.34-5; V. Gabrielsen, *Financing the Athenian Fleet: Public Taxation and Social Relations* (Baltimore and London 1994) 134-6.

Assembly-decrees were also required for spending on the dockyards and other military capital.[38] Likewise the *dēmos* set the *misthos* ('pay') of the cavalry-corps, which was the army's highest recurring cost.[39] The expedition that Athens sent to Sicily in 416/15 illustrates how assemblygoers sought to control the cost of each campaign. With this expedition they may have authorised their generals to work out its requirements.[40] But they still passed a decree on its size and budget.[41] Because this expedition went from bad to worse, repeated votes were taken on committing extra resources.[42]

The Athenian assembly may have controlled public spending. But day-to-day financial oversight fell to the council of five hundred.[43] In his description of the Athenian constitution Aristotle's pupil explains how this council 'administers together with the other magistrates most financial matters'.[44] The *boulē* ('council') oversaw both income and expenditure. Consequently Athena's treasurers, for example, took over the money from their predecessors in the council's presence. In classical Athens it was the *pōlētai* ('sellers') who auctioned the leases of public lands and silver-mines, the contracts for tax-collecting and the property of defendants that the law-courts had confiscated.[45] These auctions were conducted before the *boulē*, which apparently chose the winning bids.[46] The council also held the records of the instalments that the auction-winners had to pay. Instalments were consequently paid to the *apodektai* ('receivers') in the council-chamber.[47] The *boulē* ensured that the revenue so raised was allocated to the magistrates in charge of the funds for different public activities and spent only on what the *dēmos* had authorised.[48]

The council of five hundred met on no less than 275 days per year.[49] Public finance apparently was discussed in almost all of its meetings. In *his Constitution of the Athenians*

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[38] E.g. *IG* i^3 52.A30-2.

[39] E.g. Lys. fr. IV.73-90 Gernet and Bizos; Pritchard (n. 26) 106-9.

[40] Thuc. 6.26.1.

[41] Thuc. 6.43.1; *IG* i^3 93.7, 12-13, 47-9; L. J. Samons, *Empire of the Owl: Athenian Imperial Finance* (Stuttgart 2000) 239.

[42] Thuc. 6.94.4; 7.16.2; Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.34; 1.2.1-2.

[43] Migeotte (n. 29) 426; C. Pébarthe, *Monnaie et marché à Athènes à l'époque classique* (Paris 2008) 66; P. J. Rhodes, *The Athenian Boule* (Oxford 1972) 88-112.

[44] [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 47.1.

[45] E.g. [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 47.2; *IG* i^3 84.14-18; P. J. Rhodes, 'The Organisation of Athenian Public Finance', *G&R* 40 (2013) 209.

[46] [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 47.2; Rhodes (n. 11) 553.

[47] [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 47.5.

[48] [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 45.2; 48.2-3.

[49] Hansen (n. 28) 250-1.

Pseudo-Xenophon made 'provision of money' second only to 'the war' in his list of the matters on which the *boulē* invariably deliberated.[50] In particular it was responsible for making sure that there was always enough income to cover expenditure.[51] What allowed it to fulfil this responsibility was its supervision of the state's treasurers and other financial magistrates.[52] Each of these financial boards may have managed an important aspect of public finance. But the *bouleutai* ('councillors') oversaw all aspects and so could form the fullest picture of the Athenian state's fiscal position. P. J. Rhodes concludes: 'Only the *boulē* had access to the information which would show whether the city could afford some new charge on its resources, and this must have been the reason for the *boulē*'s financial predominance.'[53] In Athenian democracy the council drafted the *probouleumata* ('preliminary proposals') that the assembly debated and voted on.[54] A *probouleuma* could range from a detailed policy-proposal to a simple order for the assembly to debate and vote on a matter. The *dēmos* was free to accept, modify or reject such a proposal. But it was 'a fundamental principle of Athenian democracy' that it could only consider a matter for which there was a *probouleuma*.[55] This meant that if *bouleutai* were concerned about a funding shortfall they could bring it to the people's attention and propose a way to meet it.[56] Hence the setting of the assembly's agenda by the *boulē* guaranteed that its detailed knowledge of the city's overall fiscal position fed into the assembly's debates about public spending.

Athenian politicians also required a good knowledge of public finance.[57] Aristotle and Xenophon listed the five most important items of public business on which they had to be capable of speaking.[58] In each of their lists public finance was the topmost item. These two writers agreed on the facts and the figures related to public spending and revenue that a diligent leader would have at his fingertips. For them the overarching goal

[50] [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 3.2.

[51] E.g. Ar. *Eq.* 773-6; Lys. 30.22.

[52] Rhodes (n. 43) 104-5.

[53] Rhodes (n. 43) 105.

[54] E.g. [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 44.4; 45.4; Hansen (n. 28) 255-7; Rhodes (n. 11) 543-4.

[55] E.g. Dem. 22.5, 25; Hansen (n. 28) 138-40. Quotation from Hansen (n. 28) 138.

[56] E.g. *IG* i^3 71; L. Kallet-Marx, 'Money Talks: Rhetor, *Demos* and the Resources of the Athenian Empire', in R. Osborne and S. Hornblower (eds.), *Ritual, Finance, Politics: Athenian Democratic Accounts Presented to David Lewis* (Oxford 1994) 229.

[57] J. K. Davies, 'Athenian Fiscal Expertise and Its Influence', *MediterrAn*t 7 (2004) 508; Kallet-Marx (n. 56) 232-7; C. Pébarthe, 'La circulation de l'information et l'adoption d'un décret: les décisions économiques et financières à l'époque de Périclès', in L. Capdetrey and J. Nelis-Clément (eds.), *La circulation de l'information dans les états* (Bordeaux 2006) 35-51.

[58] Arist. *Rh.* 1.4.7-13; Xen. *Mem.* 3.6.4-6.

that a politician should have was to make the state richer.[59] This goal required him to know its *prosodoi* ('incomes') and the total to which they came. He should be capable of suggesting new income-streams and ways of increasing underperforming ones. For these writers a competent politician knew too 'all of the city's *dapanai* or expenses'.[60] As part of his effort to enrich it he could tell the *dēmos* which expenses were unnecessary and so dispensable and how the costs of others could be reduced.

The requirement that politicians have such detailed knowledge indicates that they also played an important role in the assembly's public-spending debates. Certainly the *boulē* was primarily responsible for aggregating the disparate data on Athens's overall fiscal position.[61] But it was the public speakers who communicated this financial information to the *dēmos* and argued the pros and cons of each proposal. Therefore if a politician wanted to support a *probouleuma* – or to propose a modified version – he needed to be capable of both estimating its cost accurately and relating this *dapanē* to the state's total income and total spending. In response to a rival politician's branding of such a proposal as unaffordable he would have to tell assemblygoers how its cost could be reduced or where a new *prosodos* could be found to pay for it.

The Athenian *dēmos* would appear then to have been well informed of the financial implications of their decisions.[62] When they voted to create a festival or to start a war, they had a good idea what it would cost. Their politicians had told them which *prosodos* could be used or whether it required a new income-stream or the tapping of cash-reserves. In voting on a proposal assemblygoers were deciding too what portion of the state's income it should use up. In constantly adjudicating such public-spending debates the *dēmos* consolidated their general knowledge of what Athens spent on its major public activities.[63] Consequently assemblygoers sensed if a proposal would cost the same as what they normally spent on such things. This made it easier for them to change their normal spending-pattern and so what they spent on one class of public activities relative to others. Such votes allowed the *dēmos* to spend more on what they saw as a priority and less on what they saw as less of a priority. Over time the sums that they spent reflected the order of the priorities that they had set for their state. By calculating these sums my recent book

[59] Arist. *Rh.* 1.4.8; Xen. *Mem.* 3.6.4-6.

[60] Arist. *Rh.* 1.4.8; cf. Xen. *Mem.* 3.6.6.

[61] For the council's role in aggregating data for the assembly's debates see e.g. J. Ober, *Democracy and Knowledge: Innovation and Learning in Classical Athens* (Princeton 2008) 142-59.

[62] Kallet-Marx (n. 56) 232-3.

[63] Pébarthe (n. 43) 66-8. For the general knowledge that the *dēmos* acquired by running the government see e.g. Ober (n. 61) 166-7; Pritchard (n. 23) 33, 47-51.

also aims to confirm whether religious festivals or wars were the overriding priority of the classical Athenian people.

4. The Cost of Festivals

With some justification the classical Athenians believed that they staged more festivals than any other Greek state.[64] Because the City Dionysia and the Great Panathenaea were the largest of their festivals, they accounted for a significant proportion of what the *dēmos* spent on their program of *polis*-level religious celebrations. Consequently costing these two festivals provides a solid base for working out the full program's cost. Wilson has reliably costed the City Dionysia. Consequently in *Public Spending and Democracy in Classical Athens* I focus on the Great Panathenaea. Attic farmers and elite chorus-sponsors paid for a lot of this four yearly *heortē*. The evidence that survives allows us to calculate what each group spent.[65] There are documented figures for public spending on this festival.[66] By adding up this private and public spending I have established the cost of this second major festival.[67] Table 1 summarises my costing of the Great Panathenaea. Importantly it parallels the cost-estimate of the City Dionysia by Wilson. I estimate that each celebration of Athena's festival cost 25 t. 1725 dr., that is, 650 kilograms of silver. Wilson costs the other showcase of classical Athens at the comparable figure of 28 t. 5200 dr. Private individuals paid for about half of the Great Panathenaea. Likewise Wilson shows that private spending on the City Dionysia roughly matched what the state spent. Consequently our independent costings of the two major Athenian *heortai* corroborate each other. Over the four-year period total spending on the Great Panathenaea was on average 6 t. 1681 dr. per year.

We simply lack the evidence to cost each of the other festivals of classical Athens. But we do know enough to estimate the scale of its two major *heortai* relative to the rest of its festival program. In classical Athens the scale of a festival largely determined its cost. This fact makes an estimate of relative scale enormously useful, because it points to the proportion of the program's full cost for which these two showcases accounted. The standard ritual acts of an Athenian *heortē* were the sacrifice, the procession, the *agōnes* ('contests') for choruses and teams, and the other contests for individual competitors.[68]

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[64] E.g. Isoc. 4.45; [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 3.2; cf. Ar. *Nub.* 307-10.

[65] Pritchard (n. 26) 28-32, 34-9.

[66] E.g. *IG* i^3 370.66-8; 375.3-8; Pritchard (n. 26) 32-4; Wilson (n. 15) 90.

[67] Pritchard (n. 26) 39; cf. Migeotte (n. 29) 552.

[68] D. J. Phillips and D. M. Pritchard, 'Introduction', in D. J. Phillips and D. M. Pritchard (eds.), *Sport and Festival in the Ancient Greek World* (Swansea 2003) xi-xii.

My recent book quantifies the scale of each act at the City Dionysia and the Great Panathenaea and compares this scale to what happened in the rest of Athens's festivals. These comparisons allow us to estimate safely what proportion of total religious spending the two major festivals consumed. Because the costs of them are known, this proportion makes possible a cost-estimate of the full program of Athenian festivals.

Table 1: The Cost of the Great Panathenaea in the 380s

Public Expenditure	12 t. 3000 dr.
Market Value of the Olive Oil for the Prizes	5 t. 2725 dr.
Festival Liturgies	7 t. 2000 dr.
10 *gumnasiarkhiai* for the torch race at 1200 dr. each = 2 t. 10 liturgies for the ship race at 1500 dr. each = 2 t. 3000 dr. 9 *khorēgiai* for the pyrrhic choruses at 800 dr. each = 1 t. 1200 dr. 6 *khorēgiai* for the cyclic choruses at 300 dr. each = 1800 dr. 10 liturgies for the *euandria* at 800 dr. each = 1 t. 2000 dr.	
TOTAL	**25 T. 1725 DR.**
ANNUAL COST	**6 T. 1931 DR.**

The sacrifices of the City Dionysia and the Great Panathenaea represented 8 percent of the 1332 cows that the Athenian *polis* sacrificed each year.[69] Their processions were several times larger than the 12 or so others that the *polis* staged.[70] The City Dionysia accounted for 29 percent of festival liturgies in 3 out of 4 years, while together the two *heortai* accounted for 59 percent.[71] The contests for individuals at the Great Panathenaea represented 19 percent of all such *agōnes* and a staggering 83 percent of the monetary value of their prizes.[72] On the basis of these figures a cautious estimate of the proportion of total festival spending that the City Dionysia and the Great Panathenaea probably consumed is 35 percent. This percentage suggests that the entire program of *polis*-sponsored festivals costed 100 t. 3231 dr., that is, 2.6 tons of silver per year.[73] Table 2

[69] Pritchard (n. 26) 40-1.

[70] For these 12 or so processions see e.g. R. Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford 2005) 178 n. 2. For the relative scale of those at the City Dionysia and the Great Panathenaea see Pritchard (n. 26) 42-3.

[71] J. K. Davies, 'Demosthenes on liturgies: A note', *JHS* 87 (1967) 40; Pritchard (n. 26) 43-6.

[72] Pritchard (n. 26) 45-8.

[73] Pritchard (n. 26) 49; cf. Migeotte (n. 29) 552.

summarises my cost-estimate of Athenian democracy.[74] It confirms that the total cost of festivals was the same as what fourth-century Athenians spent on running their government. The 2.6 tons of silver for festivals was indeed a large sum of money.

Table 2: The Annual Cost of Athenian Democracy

Fixed-Operating Costs	**420s**	**370s**	**330s**
Jurors	53 t. 2800 dr.	26 t. 4400 dr.	26 t. 4400 dr.
Councillors	9 t. 4625 dr.	11 t. 3600 dr.	14 t. 3000 dr.
Assemblygoers	0	20 t.	45 t.
Magistrates	69 t. 3195 dr.	29 t. 3025 dr.	29 t. 3025 dr.
Undersecretaries	2 t. 5360 dr.	1 t. 5680 dr.	1 t. 5680 dr.
Public Slaves	21 t. 1527 dr.	8 t. 3527 dr.	8 t. 3527 dr.
Gold Crowns	0	0	2 t.
TOTAL	**156 T. 5507 DR.**	**98 T. 2232 DR.**	**128 T. 1632 DR.**

Of course Athens was the leading cultural centre of the classical Greek world. The disciplines of drama, oratory, literature and the visual arts were developed to a far higher level of quality in this state than in any other. Ever since Johann Winckelmann, who was the eighteenth-century pioneer of Classical Archaeology, this Athenian cultural revolution has been interpreted as a direct result of Athenian democracy.[75] Yet my high estimate of the full cost of Athenian festivals reveals two more reasons for the cultural revolution of classical Athens. These reasons were the extraordinary wealth of this *polis* and its elite, and the decision that its assemblygoers regularly made that both should spend heavily on festival-based contests.

5. The Cost of War

In classical Athens military spending varied greatly from 430 to 350. In the Peloponnesian War's course the Athenians lost more than 50 percent of their population.[76] Their final defeat brought to an end their income-bearing empire.[77] After this war the *dēmos* were simply not capable of waging wars on the same scale. This makes it necessary

[74] For this cost-estimate see Pritchard (n. 26) 52-90.

[75] E.g. D. Boedeker, and K. A. Raaflaub 'Reflections and Conclusions: Democracy, Empire and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens', in D. Boedeker and K. A. Raaflaub (eds.), *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens* (Cambridge, MA and London 1998) 319-44; Ober (n. 61) 81-2.

[76] See n. 28.

[77] D. M. Pritchard, 'Public Finance and War in Ancient Greece', *G&R* 62 (2015) 53-4.

to calculate military spending before and after 405/4. In the 420s the *dēmos* used imperial income and the surplus of income raised internally to pay for wars.[78] For these two income-streams reliable figures have survived.[79] The same applies to the loans that Athens took out and the emergency taxes that it levied to pay for the Peloponnesian War's first phase.[80] By adding up these figures *Public Spending and Democracy in Classical Athens* establishes what the Athenian state spent on its armed forces in the 420s. Table 3 summarises my adding up. The grand total for this military spending is 16,334 t. This translates into an unexpectedly high average of 1485 t., that is, 38.6 tons of silver per year. This astronomical cost of Athenian naval warfare fully explains why Pericles emphasised the centrality of money in his pre-war speeches.[81] They also explain why the Athenian *dēmos* always believed that the military power and the security of their state depended on ships, walls and especially money.[82]

Table 3: Public Spending on the Armed Forces in the 420s

Archon Year	Tribute	Other Imperial Income	Internal Surplus	War Tax	War Loans	TOTAL
433/2	388 t.	212 t.	100 t.	0	76 t.	**776 t.**
432/1	388 t.	212 t.	100 t.	0	1145 t.	**1845 t.**
431/0	388 t.	212 t.	100 t.	0	1370 t.	**2070 t.**
430/29	388 t.	212 t.	100 t.	0	1300 t.	**2000 t.**
429/8	388 t.	212 t.	100 t.	0	600 t.	**1300 t.**
428/7	388 t.	212 t.	100 t.	200 t.	200 t.	**1100 t.**
427/6	388 t.	212 t.	100 t.	200 t.	100 t.	**1000 t.**
426/5	388 t.	212 t.	100 t.	200 t.	261 t.	**1161 t.**
425/4	1200 t.	212 t.	100 t.	0	130 t.	**1642 t.**
424/3	1200 t.	212 t.	100 t.	0	163 t.	**1675 t.**
423/2	1200 t.	212 t.	100 t.	0	253 t.	**1765 t.**
ANNUAL AVERAGE						**1485 T.**

[78] For this internal income see Pritchard (n. 26) 88-90, 92.

[79] E.g. Thuc. 2.13.2-3; Xen. *An.* 7.1.27; *IG* i^3 279.

[80] Thuc. 3.19.1; *IG* i^3 369; Pritchard (n. 26) 93-6.

[81] E.g. Thuc. 1.142.4-5, 143.4-5; 2.13.2-3, 65.7.

[82] E.g. Andoc. 3; Ar. *Ach.* 162-3; *Av.* 378-80; *Ran.* 365; *Lys.* 170-6, 421-3, 488, 496; *Plut.* 112; Dem. 4.40; 8.48; 9.40, 70-2; 13.10; 22.12-17; Lys. 13.46-8; 28.15; D. M. Pritchard, ''The Fractured Imaginary': Popular Thinking on Military Matters in Fifth-Century Athens', *AH* 28 (1998) 55.

For the 50 years after the Peloponnesian War no public-spending figures survive. This means that the only available costing-method is the isolating of individual costs and the estimating of each on the basis of evidence. My recent book groups these costs of the armed forces into the basic cost-classes of modern economics: capital costs, fixed-operating costs and variable-operating costs.[83] There is enough evidence to estimate these first two cost-classes from the 370s to the 350s. With variable-operating costs this is only possible for the 370s. Consequently the full cost of the armed forces can only be estimated reliably in the 370s.[84] Table 4 summarises my estimates of war's three cost-classes. The annual totals of them range from nearly 1000 t. to only 140 t. These totals illustrate again the great variability of military spending from year to year. In the 370s the average of the full cost of the armed forces was 522 t., that is, 13.6 tons of silver per year.[85]

Table 4: The Full Cost of the Armed Forces in the 370s

Archon Year	Capital Costs	Fixed-Operating Costs	Variable-Operating Costs	TOTAL
378/7	24 t.	133 t.	72 t.	**229 t.**
377/6	24 t.	133 t.	112 t.	**269 t.**
376/5	7 t.	133 t.	787 t.	**927 t.**
375/4	7 t.	133 t.	858 t.	**998 t.**
374/3	7 t.	133 t.	229 t.	**369 t.**
373/2	7 t.	133 t.	500 t.	**640 t.**
372/1	7 t.	133 t.	787 t.	**927 t.**
371/0	7 t.	133 t.	0	**140 t.**
370/69	7 t.	133 t.	60 t.	**200 t.**
ANNUAL AVERAGE				**522 T.**

6. Public-Spending Priorities

These cost-estimates refute Böckh's negative view of what classical Athens spent on festivals. Admittedly my estimates reveal that Athenian *heortai* were generously funded. The 100 t. that were spent on them each year was a large sum. Of this total the City Dionysia and the Great Panathenaea accounted for 35 percent. Thus with good reason

[83] Pritchard (n. 26) 13-14.
[84] Pritchard (n. 26) 99-110.
[85] Pritchard (n. 26) 111.

Demosthenes focussed on these two *heortai* in his negative remarks about public spending.[86] In spite of this, my *Public Spending and Democracy in Classical Athens* puts beyond doubt that vastly more was always spent on the armed forces. In times of war this spending easily surpassed the combined costs of festivals *and* government. In the 370s the total of annual spending on *polemos* ('war') was some 500 t. This was 5 times as much as the Athenians were spending on their festivals. With imperial income and enormous cash-reserves their fifth-century forebears spent a great deal more. In the 420s public spending *alone* on the armed forces was 1500 t. per year. This was 15 times higher than spending on festivals. In times of peace the Athenian armed forces still cost a great deal. In the 370s their capital costs and fixed-operating costs added up to 150 t. per year. This was 50 percent more than spending on festivals or democracy. In the 420s Athens paid its cavalry-corps 3 times what it would in the 370s and had twice as many guard ships guarding Attica's coasts.[87] Consequently even in times of peace the Athenians of the 420s spent more on their armed forces than they did on festivals *and* politics combined.

The two literary passages that Böckh presented in support of his view are manifestly unreliable. The comparison that the young Demosthenes drew between the disordered *polemos* of his contemporaries and their ordered *heortai* was part of his ill-conceived attempt to shame the *dēmos* into fighting Philip II. For the classical Athenians orderliness both encouraged citizens to be *sōphrones* ('moderate') and played a big part in their success in battle.[88] By describing their military activity as 'disordered, uncorrected and indeterminate' Demosthenes was criticising his fellow citizens for their lack of an important civic virtue.[89] These and other criticisms that Demosthenes made about Athenian warmaking were completely false.[90] In particular the *dēmos* of fourth-century Athens usually spent several times more on a single naval expedition than they did on the City Dionysia and the Great Panathenaea. In 352/1, when Demosthenes delivered his assembly-speech, a naval expedition from Athens probably had 30 warships and was away for 6 months.[91] The 36 t. per annum that the Athenians spent on these two festivals would have kept such a fleet at sea for little more than 1 month.

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[86] Dem. 4.35-7.

[87] Pritchard (n. 26) 107-9.

[88] E.g. Aeschin. 1.22-7, 33-4; Dem. 18.216; Xen. *Mem.* 3.1.17; J. Roisman, *The Rhetoric of Manhood: Masculinity in the Attic Orators* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 2005) 192-5.

[89] Dem. 4.36.

[90] Pritchard (n. 23) 52-4.

[91] G. L. Cawkwell, 'Athenian Naval Power in the Fourth Century', *CQ* 34 (1984) 334-5; Pritchard (n. 26) 112, 116.

Less unexpected is the claim of Plutarch that fifth-century Athens spent more on tragic productions than they did on maintaining the Athenian Empire or fighting the Persian Wars.[92] This claim was made in a display speech of the late first century AD that Plutarch probably delivered at Athens.[93] This speech's unusual argument was that the generals and the military victories of classical Athens were more deserving of praise than its historians, orators, poets and visual artists.[94] This argument may have undervalued Plutarch's profession as a writer. But it gave him ample opportunities to display his rich knowledge of Athens's history, literature and art. *On the Glory of Athens* was not a serious analysis of classical Athens. Therefore its manifestly wild exaggerations about public spending cannot be taken at face value.

These cost-estimates of festivals and wars do more than settle a two-hundred-year-old debate. In classical Athens the *dēmos* controlled public spending. They had a good general knowledge of what the *polis* spent on its three major activities. This made it possible for them to change their spending priorities and so what they spent on one type of activity relative to others. Their votes in the assembly thus allowed the *dēmos* to spend more on what they saw as a priority. Therefore the sums that they spent reflected the order of the priorities they had for their state. My recent book's estimates leave little doubt as to what this order was. Clearly the *dēmos* judged the worship of their deities as important. But the enormous difference between the cost of festivals and the cost of war suggests that they saw *polemos* as their topmost public priority. This difference casts into doubt the often-expressed view that religion was their most important activity. That war instead was their overriding priority is corroborated by what else we know of its place in classical Athens.

The Athenian *dēmos* were immensely proud of their military history.[95] The regular funeral speeches for their war dead show vividly how the Athenians saw themselves as more courageous than the other Greeks, their reasons for fighting battles as always just and the history of Athens as an almost unbroken series of military victories.[96] In addition they saw fighting a battle as an opportunity for individuals and themselves as a group to put their courage beyond doubt.[97] By reason of his military service the poor citizen was

[92] Plut. *De glor. Ath.* 349a.

[93] Plut. *De glor. Ath.* 345f.

[94] E.g. Plut. *De glor. Ath.* 345c, 346f, 347c.

[95] E.g. J. Crowley, *The Psychology of the Athenian Hoplite: The Culture of Combat in Classical Athens* (Cambridge 2012) 88-92.

[96] Pritchard (n. 23) 33-6.

[97] E.g. Dem. 3.23-6; 10.24-5; 13.21-35; Lys. 18.24; 30.26; Pritchard (n. 23) 38-9.

recognised to be 'a good and useful citizen' or 'good and useful to the state'.[98] The *ponoi* ('toils') that the Athenians bore in battles were repeatedly said to bring benefits: they had secured the security, military power, alliances and other international advantages that Athens enjoyed.[99] This military activity was constantly glorified and legitimised in the state's political debates, religious festivals, and public art and monuments.[100]

Polemos was not only held in the highest possible esteem by the classical Athenians. It also dominated their politics and their personal lives. Foreign policy was a major subject of political debate.[101] War was a compulsory agenda-item of each prytany's main assembly-meeting.[102] Consequently politicians required a good general knowledge of, in addition to public finances, the state's armed forces.[103] The Athenians bore the *ponoi* and the *kindunoi* ('dangers') of war much more often than they enjoyed the benefits of peace. In the fourth century they fought constantly from 396 to 386 and from 378 to 338 with only one-year periods of peace.[104] In the previous century they waged wars in 2 out of 3 years and campaigned nonstop on multiple fronts from 431 to 404.[105] Whether by land or by sea these military campaigns involved many thousands of Athenian citizens. In voting for them the *dēmos* knowingly accepted that many could be killed in action. For example, in 460/59 one of their 10 tribes lost 177 men in battles in Greece, Cyprus, Egypt and Israel/Palestine.[106] Even more extraordinary is the human cost of the Peloponnesian War. In 432/1 there were probably 60,000 Athenians living in Attica, but, after 25 years of this war, only 25,000 remained.[107] In conclusion the cultural militarism of Athenian democracy, its incessant warmaking, and the enormous costs of its wars both in lives and in treasure leave us in no doubt: the Athenian people judged their topmost public priority to be war.

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[98] E.g. Aeschin. 1.11; Ar. *Ach.* 595-7; Eur. *Supp.* 886-7; Lys. 16.14; Soph. *Aj.* 410.

[99] E.g. Ar. *Ach.* 672-85; Eur. *Heracl.* 309-328, 1030-7; Lys. 2.55; Thuc. 2.36.2, 62.3.

[100] K. A. Raaflaub, 'Father of All, Destroyer of All: War in Late Fifth-Century Athenian Discourse and Ideology', in D. R. McCann and B. S. Strauss (eds.), *War and Democracy: A Comparative Study of the Korean War and the Peloponnesian War* (Armonk and London 2001) 307-56.

[101] A. J. L. Blanshard, 'War in the Law-Court: Some Athenian Discussions', in D. M. Pritchard (ed.), *War, Democracy and Culture in Classical Athens* (Cambridge 2010) 203-24.

[102] Ar. *Ach.* 19-27; [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 43.4; Hansen (n. 28) 133.

[103] E.g. Arist. *Rh.* 1359b34-1360a5.

[104] Pritchard (n. 23) 53.

[105] D. M. Pritchard, 'Democracy and War in Ancient Athens and Today', *G&R* 62 (2015) 145.

[106] *IG* i^3 1147.

[107] See n. 28.

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